

# Help Wanted

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**E**LEVEN o'clock came and still Spider Morrison had not eaten. He sat on a shady bench in a down-town park and pondered the philosophy of hunger. For the morning repast he had substituted a brisk walk about town. His aimless journey carrying him down a side-street which flanked a pretentious club, he had caught through an open window a fleeting glimpse of a breakfast-brightened Paradise, of white linen, gleaming silver, and obsequious negroes in spotless jackets. In plain sight a man sat laughing over a morning paper he held in one hand, while with the other he poured rich, heavy cream upon a nameless breakfast food. Mr. Morrison's philosophy was not untinged with bitterness.

The learned doctors who preach that we should cut our three square meals to two would have found in Mr. Morrison a source of delight, for he had gone them one better. In forty-eight hours his only indulgence in food had been confined to the frugal charity claimed nightly by the hopeless stragglers of the Bread Line.

Spider Morrison was down and out. Fortune passed him as though he had been a poor relation. Opportunity sped by like a red automobile on a lonely road, and left him choked with the dust of defeat. Luck—but why multiply? Why expand the old story recorded on Mr. Morrison's dingy belt by a series of nail-punched holes?

A lost, strayed, or stolen breeze, not as the breath of a furnace, swept the dusty grass and blew to Mr. Morrison's feet an abandoned newspaper. Mindful of the magazine story world of which he felt more than ever a part, Spider stooped for the sheet, expecting to read therein another chapter of his life's novel. In train-boy literature it would have happened thus. But alas, the sheet was as colorless as new-news could make it—as dull as a summer morning in the park.

An article on the first page informed Spider that "everybody" had left town. Fashion, according to the scribe, had put up her shutters, and, gathering the cash from her till, had fled for her annual plunge at the seaside. Compared to present-day New York—if the paper were to be believed—Goldsmith's deserted village was Coney Island on Sunday.

"Get wise, get wise," muttered Spider in disgust; "there's a few of us left. And the food supply ain't any bigger even with Fifth Avenue out of the scramble. I didn't take my usual trip to the mountains this year. But business—business! Oh, we slaves of the desk!"

He kicked the gravel with a worn toe and surveyed the masses passing to the sordid bench of toil. Their faces were worried, drawn, unhappy. For the privilege of dining they had paid dyspepsia's price.

**MR. MORRISON** returned to the greater interest of an uninteresting journal. From force of pernicious habit he sought the section devoted to a daily refutation of the old adage about the paucity of man's desires here below. The "Help Wanted" column caught his eye—his practiced eye, devoid of hope. Too often he had been told that the X. Y. Z. Company's agents were making twenty-five dollars a day selling novelties and that he could do the same. Too often he had learned that Madame Zaza, clairvoyant, was giving readings at the old stand. Too often, also, he had followed the thread of hope to the tangle of incompetency and inexperience.

But today a new kind of bait was dangled before the sophisticated Spider, affording entertainment and diversion. And—though old in the ways of the angler—he nibbled, for it was an attractive bait withal. Ay—he nibbled—though sneeringly and ready to draw back.

"Wanted—A healthy, normal man to perform a thirty day's task requiring nerve and endurance. Remuneration, \$500."

Assuming a knowing smile, Spider crumpled the paper in his hand and tossed it from him. It was not his custom to enroll himself among the day's catch. He might nibble at the bait, just to let the fisherman know that he was there, but he had no intention of biting. Rather would he return to the still, cool waters of his metaphorical submarine home.

The still cool waters! Relentlessly the blazing sun crept across the grass to Spider's bench. He closed his eyes to a merry-go-round of ob-



He Tightened His Belt to the Last Notch and Set Out.

jects—a rapid fire kaleidoscope of the scene upon which he had just looked. At his vitals the insatiable wolf of hunger gnawed.

"Gawd," muttered Spider. "I can see bread growing on them maples. If I was stronger I'd climb to a square meal. This is the hungriest morning of my life. Somebody's shot a cannon ball through my middle."

Again he closed his eyes, and this time, before the mystic-mazy background his dizziness inspired, he beheld a legend clear and flaming as the electric signs New York nightly pastes upon a patient sky: "Remuneration \$500." Was there that much money in the world? That would buy—how many?—breakfasts.

"Nerve and endurance," muttered Spider, "and this morning I addressed a hotel clerk as a human being. And I've endured—Gawd knows what. Why not? I can't lose—I ain't got anything to lose. Why not?"

With a shamed glance around him, he rose and moved stealthily across the grass toward the discarded paper. Returning with it to the bench, he stretched out its crumpled length and sought the address of him who dangled the bait. It came as a shock, leaving him sad, with ardor chilled. For it lay far from the park where Spider lingered, in a region to be approached only through streets many and devious. In Spider's well-worn pocket rested no plauditing nickel wherewith to soothe the grand mogul of the street car. Yes, he must walk—walk, though hunger weakened and want played tag where breakfast should have reposed.

**NEVER** in his life had Spider begged. Some left over by-law from a forgotten code held him back. Almost would he walk first. In no event would he accost his fellow man for so much as car fare.

"If I had a nickel," he told himself. "I'd buy me a drink to nerve me to the walk. I wonder if one foot'll follow the other—but there is the sun."

He tightened his belt to the last notch. "A sandwich and a cup o' coffee," he continued, "I'd look like one o' them there Roman

banquets to me. Corned beef and cabbage 'd knock me in a heap. A fifteen cent table d'hôte—dream on, you fool, dream on."

"Wanted—A healthy, normal—"

Carefully and with precision Mr. Morrison tore the notice from the sheet and bestowed it in the pocket of a plentiful vest. With dignity he rose to his feet and set out on the path that was to lead to the fairy land of remuneration and food.

The sun beat down on the pavement with a dazzle that made the merry-go-round in his head travel faster. Before him the sidewalk danced, gay and uncertain, unwilling to confine itself to the prescribed straight and narrow. Every now and then it rose unexpectedly, and he had to climb—climb. People turned to look at him—to note his stubble of beard almost to his eyes, his frayed clothes, seeming remnant of an ancient, unguessed glory, his step, variegated and unsteady. On and on he plodded through the heat, while the aforesaid wolf of hunger ceased not its gnawing.

**AT** length he stood, weak and pale, before the door of enchantment. An intellectual-looking maid, after formalities unnecessary and absurd, ushered him into a library where a little man crouched, writing, at a desk.

The room was small and musty, and choked with ancient books. Its two windows looking out upon an adjacent wall, the lack of daylight necessitated a green-globed lamp on the disordered desk. In the shifting air there was that which hinted at the mighty thoughts there evolved.

The man at the desk stole out into the center of the room, timidly, and carefully took Spider's hand. His coat was shiny and green, his forehead large, his eyes small behind the double convex.

"Thought joggler," characterized Spider, "doing the intellectual can-can far from light and air."

"Good morning," said the small man, in a gentle, insignificant voice. "I am Professor Jeremiah Bovan. I trust I am not mistaken in assuming that you have called in answer to my advertisement inserted in a well known metropolitan daily a few days since? Is my surmise correct?"

Unasked, Mr. Morrison dropped into a convenient chair. It was wide and deep, and he sank back with a sigh of relief.

"Words, idle words," he pronounced, when he was ready to reply. "But under them there's a meaning, sound and correct. You're right, sir. I'm number one of the babes in the woods. I'm little bright eyes, far from home and mother. I'm the nerve trust and endurance monopoly called out to investigate a new graft. I'm—"

"Pray be seated," interrupted the Professor. "Er—that is—of course, you are seated. Pardon me."

**HE** returned to his chair back of the desk and looked down upon Spider with the air of a judge trying a case.

"There are a few questions," he announced, "by which I shall endeavor to ascertain if you are possessed of the necessary qualifications." Mr. Morrison lay back in his chair, oblivious to questions of qualification. Not for many days had he found so comfortable a seat. For the moment he almost forgot his hunger. Then cruel fate waited to him from a distance the faint odor of an approaching meal, and the pangs returned. Yet not for the world would he have hinted at his need. Discretion seemed to him to demand that he assume the air of a gentleman waiting for James to bring the machine.

The Professor had selected a note-book from the man on his desk, and held a styligraphic pen poised in the air.

"Name, please?" he requested.

"Spider Morrison," murmured that gentleman, languidly. He was thinking of the five hundred. The Broadway hotel where he would purchase a wonderful lunch, as soon as he had his hands on that payment "in advance," was already selected. The delay he seemed in for began to annoy him.

"Age?" continued the questioner, without looking up from the book.

Mr. Morrison gathered his remaining strength and sat erect.

"See here," he said firmly while Learning

personified regarded him with mild surprise, "let's get this over with. There's no need to drag it out like the Spanish Inquisition or the sewing circle. My name, such as it is, you've got. My age I can't remember—it changes from year to year. I was born at home, quite a while ago. Over my career since then I draw a curtain—sharp—like that—with a bang. I've had the measles and the mumps, and my time's valuable, so speed along."

A FEW more inquiries, please," pleaded the abashed Professor. "Absolutely essential, I assure you. As to the state of your health—is it—"

"Out of sight," broke in Spider. "If everybody was like me under takers couldn't pay for the palms they put in the windows."

"Have you—or have you ever had—indigestion, appendicitis, peritonitis, laryngotomy—?"

"Hold on," broke in Spider. "Nix on the life insurance dope. I'm all here. Ain't I told you? Appendix and all—far—from indigestion."

"Mr. Morrison," continued the Professor, slowly, "do you—may I ask—do you imbibe—?"

"Water," said Spider firmly. "Only water. The mollycoddle carriage for mine. Wine is a mocker—I let 'er mock. Strong drink is raging—I let 'er rage."

"I am pleased to hear it, Sir," the Professor responded. "And now—regarding your habits of life? Are they simple, or are they—er—I perceive they are somewhat simple."

"Very simple," said Spider decidedly. "Very



He Stopped Suddenly, and on the Instant His Manner Was Filled With a Kindly Solicitude.

simple indeed. Me for the jug of—er—water, the verses, loaf, etc. The Waldorf bores me. The country club gets on my nerves. Yes, the wilderness for yours truly."

"And now—a foolish question, you may think—but important, I assure you. What are your favorite foods?"

MR. MORRISON sat up very straight. His favorite foods! There was an I-who-am-about-to-die-salute-look in his eyes. The odor from the kitchen had grown in fragrance, and Spider's heart beat wildly. His favorite—

"Onions," he said insanely.

"Well, well," ejaculated the surprised Pro-

fessor. "Is that so?"

"On a steak, I mean," followed up Spider. "On a tenderloin, and around it. Oh, don't talk to me. Don't rouse these sleeping passions."

"In every way," remarked the Professor thoughtfully, "you appear to me an extremely satisfactory candidate. The question which now arises is this: Are you at liberty to begin this task at once—this noon? Thirty days will suffice. Half the remuneration now, half—"

"Mister," broke in Spider, all the leisure on the map has been monopolized by him who addresses you. Tell me what you want. I'm ready."

FASTER and faster the room swam before him. He put his hand to his head to steady the merry-go-round, which was wobbling—wobbling.

The Professor had risen, one hand in the bosom of his coat, the other on

the table in the manner of one about to deliver an oration.

"For a number of years," he announced, "it has been my firm belief that man—healthy, normal man—can, without deleterious effects, exist for thirty days without tasting food of any description. In the interests of Science, mysterious mother of us all, I desire you to make this experi—"

He stopped suddenly and on the instant his manner, hitherto that of a devotee of science, mysterious mother of us all, was filled with a kindly solicitude characteristic of a more human mother.

For Spider Morrison had fainted.

## Curious Facts



OMEWHERE in the bed of the Hudson River just off of West Point lies buried the larger part of a great iron chain, one of several ordered by General Washington, during the Revolution, to be constructed to prevent the enemy from ascending certain rivers to accomplish strategic points of vantage. The

British were making strenuous efforts to get hold of the Hudson in order to keep free communication with Canada by the additional channels of the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain, and so it was determined to obstruct the Hudson by a great chain crossing from Fort Montgomery to St. Anthony's Nose. But this was a failure, the chain parted within a week after it had been stretched, and although subsequently raised and again placed, it was destroyed by the British. Finally Washington decided to forge another and obstruct the river between West Point and Constitution Island, for here there was an abrupt change of course, and a heavy tide reduced the speed of any ship encountering it. Beside the channel was 300 feet narrower at this crossing.

The forging of a chain such as contemplated was then no small undertaking. Requests were secretly sent to various iron companies, and among the bids the most favorable came from the Sterling Iron Works, situated in one of the most beautiful regions of the east, now within the fashionable domains of Tuxedo Park. It was originally organized by Lord Sterling, in 1751, a well known officer in the Revolutionary Army, and continued in operation for more than a hundred years, meanwhile passing into the possession of Abel Noble, who married a niece of Peter Townsend, and who now in association with the latter increased the capacity of the works which eventually came into the entire possession of Peter Townsend, a patriot and filled with the spirit

of the time. He finally obtained a few Welch miners from Pennsylvania, for the heavy handling in the forging, and a number of men from Connecticut with their ox-teams to do the hauling, and when the chain was ready it was drawn over the rough mountainous roads, and through forests that had to be purposely cut in many places, and so on to New Windsor, the nearest river point and towed to West Point.

IT was a strenuous undertaking from the very start. Each link weighed 300 pounds, was two feet in length and two and a quarter inches square, and each one hundred feet was secured by a swivel, a twisting link; and at every thousand feet there was a clovis. The whole of this weighed 185 tons. When it was stretched across from West Point to Constitution Island, it was buoyed up by large sixteen-foot logs, and these were in turn held in place by the anchors. The British made no specific attack on this then invincible obstacle, for it must be remembered that in those days there was no dynamite, nor torpedoes, and none of the enemy's prowess would have pushed their way through such a barrier.

Although the British did not succeed in passing the big Hudson river chain, the American traitor, Arnold, gave it his particular attention and removed a link of it, under the pretense of having it repaired for weakness at a near-by smithy's. He wrote to Major Andre that it would not be replaced until the forts were surrendered to the British. But somehow the chain stood for its purpose and Sir Henry Clinton did not attempt to relieve Burgoyne.

Parts of this celebrated chain are to be seen among various historical museums of prominent societies. A number of years ago Mayor Hewitt of New York, then the owner of a mine near the Sterling properties became interested in finding out the whereabouts of the remaining portions of the chain. A large part of it lies

at the bottom of the river, about thirty tons were in various possessions, and at West Point there are thirteen links and a staple placed near the spot where the chain was anchored and a plate tells of the date and place of forging.

### Take Gold for Medicine.

TO the ordinary uses to which gold is put the natives of India add a number that are curious. According to the bulletin report of Messrs. Samuel Montagu & Co., gold in the form of a thin leaf is swallowed in India for medicinal purposes.

A frequent form of piety is to regild the dome of religious buildings; such operations can easily absorb \$50,000 or more. Sovereigns with a shield on the obverse side are in constant request. An inquiry as to the ultimate use of some thousands of pounds revealed the curious fact that a Rajah of roccoco tastes had imported them to form a center to each pane in the windows of his palace.

As a contrast to the savings of France, which are utilized to promote the trade of the world, those of India are buried or hoarded.

The world's production of gold is likely to exceed that of last year by \$20,000,000 and will probably be in the neighborhood of \$490,000,000.

THE gold dredges, which, within the past few years have become numerous in the mining regions of the West, have been described by one authority as "sea-less ships which plow the land, making their own floating docks and taking them with them as they go."

These dredges sometimes carry 300 tons of machinery. Starting in an excavation, filled with water from an irrigating ditch sufficient to float them, they drive their way through the land, the water following, and the soil they take up passes through their sluices, where it leaves its sands of gold.